



THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

FRED LEAF
Chief Operating Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 240-8101

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Gloria Molina
First District

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Second District

Zev Yaroslavsky
Third District

Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

January 16, 2003

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Thomas L. Garthwaite", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: ***E. COLI* OUTBREAK (JUNE, 2002)**

On July 19, 2002, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Knabe instructing me to report to you on the 1) roles and responsibilities of various government agencies in an outbreak of *E. coli*, infection and 2) the status of the local outbreak investigation and product recall. Your offices were informed previously of the status of the federal recall of beef and the identification of local cases.

Roles and Responsibilities

Federal: US Department of Agriculture (USDA):

Inspects meat-packing plants and tabulates product for recall according to product type, brand, and dates.

2. State: Department of Health Services (Food & Drug Branch):

- Coordinates recall and outbreak investigation with local jurisdictions.
- Reports any cases to CDC.

3. Local: Los Angeles County, Department of Health Services

a. DHS Public Health Acute Communicable Disease Control Unit:

Conducts local outbreak investigations; identifies cases, interviews subjects, coordinates with Environmental Health, and State Food & Drug Branch.

b. Public Health Environmental Health:

Contacts USDA's local compliance section for information on a product recall.

Contacts the local office of the State's Food & Drug Branch for information on where the product was shipped locally.

Contacts local retailers, advising them of the recall and instructing them to remove the product from their shelves; EH inspectors visit local retailers and remove any remaining product.

Summary of Outbreak Investigation

Two local cases of infection with *E. coli* with illness in June 2002 were linked to the multi-state *E. coli* outbreak, although a link to ConAgra foods could not be established with the information available. It is unclear whether a third case in August was related to the original outbreak. None of the individuals affected was hospitalized and all recovered. There have been no further cases in this outbreak.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.

TLG:bp
211:008

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors